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VARIATIONS IN BASIC WORD STUDY PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY GRADES.

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CLASSROOM PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPING WORD STUDY SKILLS IN BOTH GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL SITUATIONS ARE PRESENTED. PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY GRADES ARE CLASSIFIED UNDER THREE MAJOR LEVELS--THE WHOLE WORD, THE SEMI-ANALYTICAL, AND THE INTENSIVE ANALYSIS APPROACH. TEN PROCEDURES ARE PRESENTED, AND GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR ACCOMPLISHING WORD STUDY SKILLS ARE DESCRIBED.

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INTRODUCTION

In the following pages I wish to pass on to you some of the ways I develop word study procedures. I have classified the procedures into three major areas. This classification has been quite effective for my use in the classroom. The various procedures and activities listed here are only suggested ways and applications. They are not hard and fast rules or regulations.

These procedures are usable in both group and individual situations. They are not infallible. With motivation and direction each can be extremely interesting to primary children.

VARIATIONS IN BASIC WORD STUDY PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY GRADES

There are various word study procedures available to the teacher of the modern classroom. However, these are not always applicable to a given situation. It becomes necessary for the teacher to be familiar with as many of these procedures as possible. Then in certain situations he or she will be able to choose the best procedure for the lesson and student.

Development of good word study procedures is vital in the life of every student. Without a good background, the student can very easily fall by the wayside in all study areas. Many subject areas require reading. Without this ability to read our society has little to offer a person. Because of the necessity to read, word study procedures have become equally necessary. Lack of knowledge in this area can be detrimental throughout the student's life.

Several procedures differ in their difficulty. Some are of little difficulty to a child, while others present major problems. Use of any method should depend upon the ease or difficulty each student has with reading. In an individualized reading study situation the method should not only apply to the individual student but also to the type and variety of material being used.

I will classify the word-study procedures that I used under three major areas. First is the whole word approach; second is the semi-analytical approach; and third is the intensive analysis approach.

Whole Word Approach

Four procedures will be covered in dealing with the whole word approach. First we will discuss the word form procedure. This deals with either the meaning or pronunciation of the word. It helps the child immediately because the teacher tells the meaning or pronunciation. This should be one of the least used methods since it develops a very small amount of lasting skill in the child.

A second procedure deals with the meaning or context of the word. This skill requires more actual study from the student than does the word form area. A student would use the contextual meaning to determine the pronunciation of the word. In some instances it might be necessary to refer to some form of reference material for help. In this way a student would be using the word or contextual meaning to develop recognition.

A third way, an important one, would be visual study of the word. In many cases a good, long look at the word can produce desired results. Actually, the student is concentrating his attentions on this one activity.

He is scrutinizing the word as a whole to bring about recognition. In individual activities this is a profitable experience for children. It also has its place in the group reading program.

Last of all in the whole word method area is the structure of words. The beginnings and endings can be deleted from the child's mental picture of the word. This reveals only the root word to the child. By becoming aware of the basic word the child can use this visual simplification to recognize the unfamiliar.

These four ways take a small amount of work or effort on the part of the student. However, their applicability is determined by the teacher-student relationship.

Semi-analytical Approach

In the semi-analytical approach a teacher deals with configuration, phonics and syllabification. These three procedures require focusing attention on the procedure in use.

First is configuration. In this procedure the child is required to concentrate his attention on his word. Although the teacher helps and guides the child, each student must respond in order to understand the word study procedure. A student would use the outline or shape of the word to bring about recognition. In doing this the silhouette, length or shortness of the word are determining factors. Actually, the substance of a word along with its shadow implications fall in this area.

My second procedure in the semi-analytical approach is that of phonics. The older form of phonics is the letter-sound-blend study method. However, I have found better results with the letter-sound-relationship study method. By using the letter-sound-relationship procedure, a child determines the individual letter sounds and relates them to something he is familiar with This should promote quicker recognition and in many cases, longer retention of the word.

Last in this procedure group is syllabification. Again one can use the letter-sound-blend method. But I feel the letter-sound-relationship method to be the better of the two. In determining a word, the letter sounds of each syllable will be much more meaningful if related to something significantly familiar. Familiarity brings confidence and this is necessary for a child determining words.

Intensive Analysis Approach

The third major word study area is that of intensive analysis procedures. Under this heading come spelling, writing, and kinesthetic study skills. These areas require deep concentration and effort on the part of the student. Their thoughts should be totally involved in the procedures. Students having great difficulty usually work well in these areas. However, they are useful in isolated cases with the average and above average student.

The writing procedure is used in the following manner. A student must look at the word and then reproduce it with paper and pencil from memory. This can be used with syllable parts or with whole words. It also may require repeated attempts on the part of the student before success is attained. Variations of this procedure adapted to individual situations should prove to be effective.

Spelling is the second in this area. A student would say the letter names to produce recognition of the word. Letter repetition produces only partial recognition of the word and is best used only when other methods fail.

In the kinesthetic procedure only partial learning is obtained. The student must concentrate on the tracing of the word parts so he has only partial concentration on the actual word recognition. This procedure requires an intensity of attention and therefore, is used in extreme cases.

These ten procedures need not be stereotyped. They may be interchanged or used with the individual teacher's own adaptations. Since words are unique in appearance children must learn to respond to the various appearances possibly by using one of the previously mentioned word study procedures.

ACTIVITIES USING WORD STUDY PROCEDURES

Some of many games or activities for whole word procedures are "Broken Record," "Stare-itis," and "Skywriter." Directions for these games follow.

Broken Record

This game can be played in a group or in an individual situation. The student should understand the procedure. The teacher should say the word once. A student would then repeat the word correctly three times, as if he or she were a broken record. On an individual basis, if the child misses, a point is scored for the teacher. In a group activity another child gets a chance to be a broken record.

If the child needs a material reward, broken phonograph records can be used. The child could be rewarded with a broken record for each correct word.

Stare-itis

In this activity the word or words in question are placed on word cards or on the chalkboard. While this is being done the children must hide their eyes. When given the signal to begin the children stare at the first word. After they are sure of the word, they then stare at the teacher. The first one staring at the teacher with the correct word would win.

In an individual situation the child would stare at the word and then stare at the teacher. If the word were correct, the child would win; if incorrect, the teacher wins.

Sky-Writer

In this game the child is to recognize the word presented. If this is done the child will add the word to the tail of the airplane. Before the game the airplane is placed on the chalkboard or flannel board. With each correct answer the word is added to the tail of the plane. You may use word cards or colored chalk to add the skywriter's words to the tail of the plane.

For the semi-analytical procedures adaptations of the previous games can be used. "Triplet" can also be used with parts of words.

Triplet

In this activity the child should name the letter, give the sound, and say the word. This should be done consecutively. As soon as all three parts have been completed, the child should whisper triplet. If this is completed correctly the child scores a point. Three points must be totaled to win.

In this activity some child may need an explanation of the word triplet. Activities such as this can be used with syllables, sounds and relationships, and matching configurations with blends and relationships.

As previously stated, the preceding activities can be adapted in the intensive analysis approach. "Sharpen Me" is an activity used for the spelling and writing procedures.

Sharpen Me

To play "Sharpen Me" you need paper, pencil and either printed or written word cards. Each word should be copied with the pencil onto the paper until it has been copied correctly three times. Use dull or moderately dull pencils. When a child responds correctly he gets to sharpen his dull pencil.

"Sharpen Me" can be adapted to tactile or tracing efforts used in the kinesthetic procedure. Any method used to make the letters to be reproduced stand out should prove effective for this activity.

CONCLUSION

These thoughts and ideas are the result of practical application of standard methods plus a little experience with individual problems. I have found that by having a basic idea of these various word study procedures I can easily decide which method is best in a specific class situation. Also, having these procedures at your fingertips gives you a basic agility needed in a class in this area.

Perhaps these ideas will give you a stepping off point in development of those procedures best for you and your class. As I said before, these are not rigid rules and regulations, only workable situations used in one classroom.